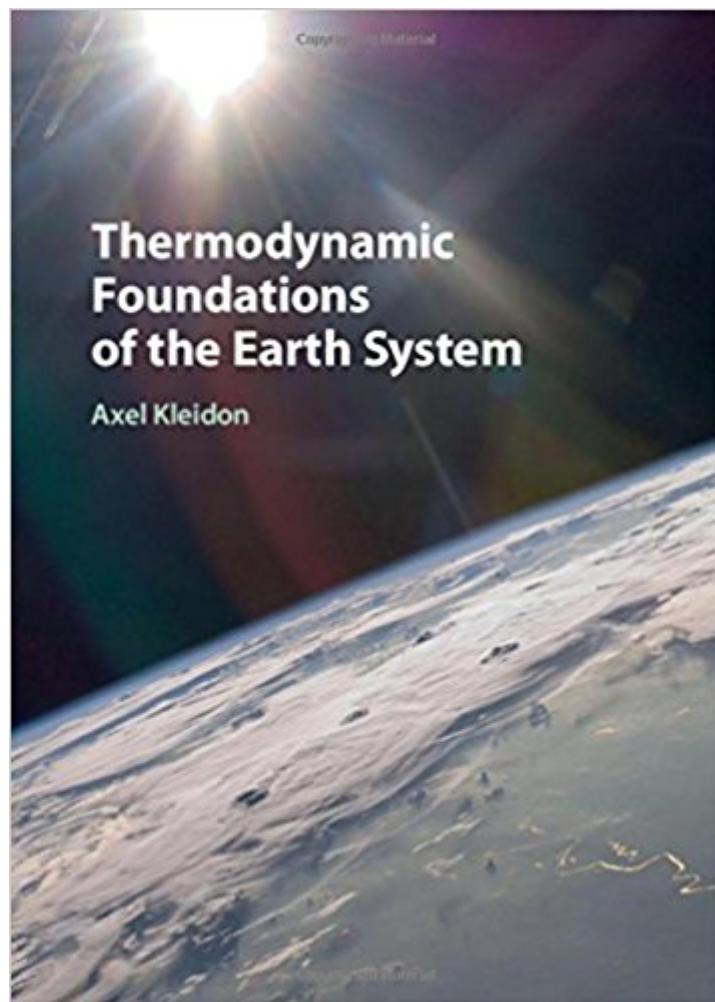


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Thermodynamic Foundations Of The Earth System



Synopsis

Thermodynamics sets fundamental laws for all physical processes and is central to driving and maintaining planetary dynamics. But how do Earth system processes perform work, where do they derive energy from, and what are the limits? This accessible book describes how the laws of thermodynamics apply to Earth system processes, from solar radiation to motion, geochemical cycling and biotic activity. It presents a novel view of the thermodynamic Earth system explaining how it functions and evolves, how different forms of disequilibrium are being maintained, and how evolutionary trends can be interpreted as thermodynamic trends. It also offers an original perspective on human activity, formulating this in terms of a thermodynamic, Earth system process. This book uses simple conceptual models and basic mathematical treatments to illustrate the application of thermodynamics to Earth system processes, making it ideal for researchers and graduate students across a range of Earth and environmental science disciplines.

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This book uses simple conceptual models and basic mathematical treatments to describe how the laws of thermodynamics apply to Earth system processes, from solar radiation to motion, geochemical cycling and biotic activity. It is an accessible reference for researchers and graduate students across a broad range of Earth science disciplines.

Axel Kleidon leads a research group in Biospheric Theory and Modelling at the Max-Planck-Institute

for Biogeochemistry, Jena, Germany. He uses thermodynamics to quantify natural energy conversions within the Earth system and their limits, and applies this approach to understand atmosphere-biosphere interactions, Earth system responses to global change, and the natural limits of renewable energy.

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